

## METHODS AND TECHNIQUES OF DR. SHAWQI DAYF IN THE LITERARY CRITICISM

MD. MOKHLISUR RAHMAN RATNA

Research Scholar, Department of Arabic, Assam University, Silchar, Assam, India

### ABSTRACT

Ahmad Shawqi Abd Al-Salam Dayf (13 January 1910 – 13 March 2005), was one of the most influential 20th century Egyptian writers and intellectuals, and a figurehead for the Renaissance and the modernist movement in the Arab World. He had deep knowledge in the western literature and criticism. He became one of the towering personalities in Arabic literary criticism. In literary criticism, he largely followed the styles and methods of the great like Taha Hussain, Abbas Mahmud al-Aqqad and Mohammad Hussain Haikal.

Shawqi Dayf divided the Arabic literature into five periods based on the political conditions, while his contemporaries depended on historical events and social conditions, which starts with the Pre-Islamic period and ends with the modern period. Although, Shawqi Dayf largely based his method of criticism on political conditions, he sometimes kept in mind the historical and social conditions also, like his guide **Taha Hussain**. His critical approach to biographical literature is mainly based on historical events.

Dayf's main three doctrines are “**Al- Suna, Al-Tasnuu and Al-Tasn'i**”. He opined that Arabic literature, particularly the poetry, remained the same in content and style until the modern period. He has applied the integrative approach in his study on Arabic literary personalities.

He has based his method for criticism on the approach followed by "**Hypotile Taine**". He implied the psychological approach in his study of the poets and prose writers. Sometimes he followed the historical approach in his criticism

### INTRODUCTION

Ahmad Shawqi Abd Al-Salam Dayf (13 January 1910 – 13 March 2005), was one of the most influential 20th century Egyptian writers and intellectuals, and a figurehead for the Renaissance and the modernist movement in the Arab World. He was famous with his sobriquet Shawqi Dayf. He had deep knowledge in the western literature and criticism. He became one of the towering personalities in Arabic literary criticism. In literary criticism, he largely followed the styles and methods of the great like Taha Hussain, Abbas Mahmud al-Aqqad and Mohammad Hussain Haikal.

Literary criticism is an attempt to explain a literary work. A literary critic is one, who explains or interprets a literary work – its meaning, production, aestheticism and historical value.

In his famous book *The History of Arabic Literature*, Shawqi Dayf divided the literature into five periods, which starts with the Pre-Islamic period and ends with the modern period.

Shawqi Dayf divided the Arabic literary periods as per the political conditions, while his contemporaries depended on historical events and social conditions.

Shawqi Dayf in his book *The Age of Nations and Imarat* (عصر الدول والإمارات) says that inspite of spread of Arabic literature in different regions and its division into various periods, there has always been unity in thoughts, emotions, feelings and the spirit.

Although, Shawqi Dayf largely based his method of criticism on political conditions, he sometimes kept in mind the historical and social conditions also, like his guide Taha Hussain.

His methods and approaches to criticism in biographical literature differ in many ways from the approaches of other critics. His critical approach to biographical literature is mainly based on historical events.

Dayf's main three doctrines are "Al- Suna, Al-Tasnuu and Al-Tasn'i (الصنعة، والتصنع، والتصنيع)". He followed these doctrines in his famous books: *Al-Fan wa Mazahibuhu fi Al-Sh'ir Al-Arabi* and *Al-Fan wa Mazahibuhu fi Al-Nas'h Al-Arabi*.

He opined that Arabic literature, particularly the poetry, remained the same in content and style until the modern period. He held that for a critic thorough and deep knowledge of literature is a must He has applied the integrative approach in his study on Arabic literary personalities.

He has based his method for criticism on the approach followed by "Hypotile Taine". Shawqi Dayf stressed on objectivity, accuracy thorough knowledge of history and positive approach to a particular text or personality.

He implied the psychological approach in his study of the poets and prose writers. Sometimes he followed the historical approach in his criticism. He also used what is called (الوجهة الإقليمية) or Regional Destination Studies.

Shawki Dayf was not in favour of a single approach to the literature. He says that the nature of literature is complex and hence different methods are to be applied so as to achieve the objectives of the literature.

Dayf says the criticism is a science, which became a part of intellectual research since Aristotle's period.

Dayf says that the analysis and evaluation are among the most important elements of criticism in literature.

The imaging of the literary personalities is an art. The critic studies the literary figures and shows their personalities in a clear manner after analyzing their creation and their ideas, emotions and feeling in their literary writings.

"Artistic beauty" is the most essential part of Arabic criticism. Artistic beauty always explores the style, technique and trends of the literature.

He further says that the art criticism is a discussion or evaluation of visual art. Art critics usually criticize art in the context of aesthetics or the theory of beauty.

Artists often have an uneasy relationship with their critics. Artists usually need positive opinions from the critics for their work.

He says Arabic poetry is the earliest form of Arabic literature. Present knowledge of poetry in Arabic dates from the 6th century, but oral poetry is believed to predate that period.

He categorized the Arabic poetry into two main types, rhymed or measured, and poetical prose, the former greatly preceded the latter. The rhymed poetry falls within fifteen different meters collected and explained by al-Farahidi in his famous *The Science of 'Arud*. Al-Akhfash, a student of al-Farahidi, later added one more meter to make them sixteen.

The meters of the rhythmical poetry are known in Arabic as "meter" (بحور / buḥūr). The measuring unit of meter is known as "tafīlah" (تفعيلة), and every meter contains a certain number of tafīlas which the poet has to apply in every verse (بيت / bayt) of the poem. The measuring procedure of a poem is very rigorous. Sometimes adding or removing a consonant or a vowel can shift the bayt from one meter to another. Also, in rhymed poetry, every bayt has to end with the same rhyme (قافية / qāfiyah) throughout the poem.

The researchers and critics of Arabic poetry usually classify the entire poetry into two categories: classical and modern poetry. Classical poetry was written before the Arabic renaissance (al-Nahḍah). Thus, all poetry that was written in the classical style is called "classical" or "traditional poetry", since it follows the traditional style and structure. It is also known as "horizontal poetry" in reference to its horizontal parallel structure. Modern poetry, on the other hand, deviated from classical poetry in its content, style, structure, rhyme and topics.

Arabic music or Arab music is the music of the Arab world. Arab music, though independent and very alive, has a long history of interaction with many other regional musical styles and genres.

Dayf says Pre-Islamic Arab music was similar to that of Ancient-Middle-Eastern music.

To sum up this topic I would like to state that Shawqi Dayf was a towering personality in the field of criticism. His contribution to criticism is held in high esteem by the great critics and his books on criticism. Particularly *Fi Al- Naqd Al-Adabi* is considered a very important book on modern literary criticism

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